

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 27, 2009

The Honorable Daniel Inouye, Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-128, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran, Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-146A, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye and Ranking Member Cochran:

As members who are committed to farm policy, nutrition, wildlife conservation, and finding new sources of home-grown energy, we would like express the need to allocate sufficient funding levels for the Agriculture Subcommittee in future appropriations bills. We support effective budget discipline, and understand the difficult decisions you face in determining sound funding levels within budget constraints. However, as leaders and supporters of programs in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L.110-234) that promotes specialty crops, conservation programs, and renewable energy, we were disappointed with a number of significant cuts to mandatory agricultural spending included in the Senate's mark of the FY2009 Agriculture Appropriations Bill (S.3289).

We are particularly concerned with the funding cuts to three key areas of the Farm Bill: specialty crops, conservation, and energy. This Farm Bill included the first ever specialty crops title, which promotes the production and consumption of fruits and vegetables. Unfortunately, this area received a proposed cut of \$38 million in the most recent Senate mark. It is critical that we maintain the farm bill spending requirements and ensure that specialty crop funds should not be considered for any other purpose than what was intended in the farm bill negotiations process. Conservation programs received a combined proposed cut of over \$460 million. Growers utilize these critical conservation programs to conserve land, protect wildlife habitats, and improve water and air quality. Additionally, the Farm Bill assists in meeting the Renewable Fuel Standard by promoting the development and production of advanced biofuels, such as cellulosic ethanol. However, in the Senate's mark of the Agriculture Appropriations bill, energy programs received proposed cuts totaling \$85 million. Particularly at a time when concerns over energy supplies are at the forefront, it is imperative that we support programs that would benefit clean, renewable, and domestic energy production.

This bipartisan Farm Bill was the result of a long and difficult negotiation process, fully offset by the careful negotiations of the Senate Finance Committee. The final bill which includes new funding for specialty crops, conservation, and energy was fully paid for with offsets and passed

with broad support. We appreciate that S.3289 would provide funding for some of these existing programs above FY2008 appropriated levels, however the measure would result in significant reductions in funding for the programs provided through the Farm Bill. We ask that in considering future appropriations bills, you take these key areas into consideration and allocate funding levels that adequately cover these critical programs areas.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Patricia Stenow

Mike Cryer

NWZ

Blanche L. Linsch

Bob Carey, Jr.

Carl Leri

John Hume

Shirrod Brown

John F. Kung

Bill Nelson

Charles Sch

Barla Box

Maria Carbone

Stephen Smith